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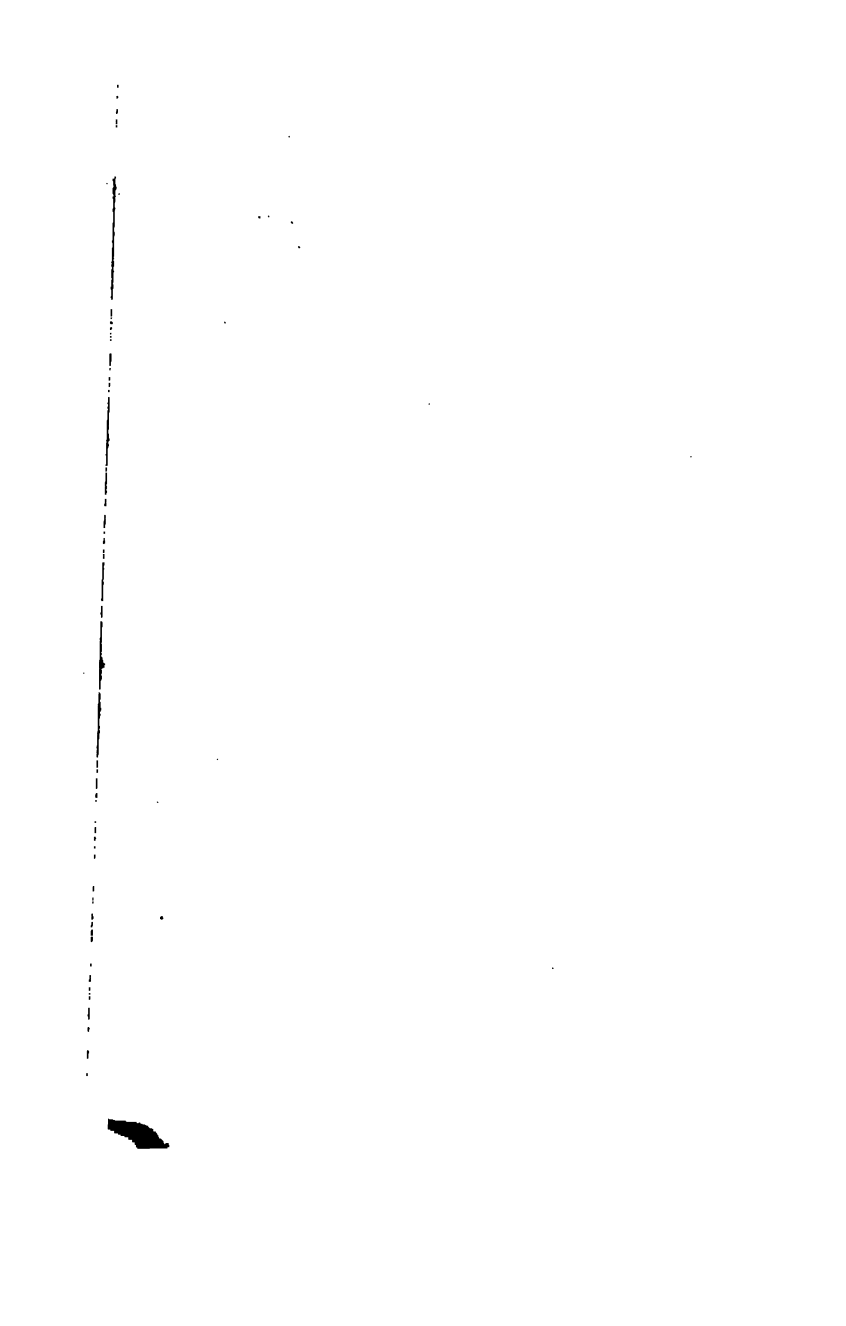
The
Intermediate State

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THE
INTERMEDIATE STATE.

II CORINTHIANS V.

BY THE LATE
Frederick
DUKE OF MANCHESTER.

LONDON:
WERTHEIM AND MACINTOSH,
24, PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1856.



101. d. 401.

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THE following Tract, which appeared originally in a Periodical, is reprinted in a separate form in compliance with the desire of friends, who have felt interested in it. It was corrected by the Author shortly before his death.

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

2 CORINTHIANS V.

NOT a few of the advocates for our Lord's personal reign upon earth have maintained views with regard to the intermediate state of the soul, which are adverse to the doctrine upon that subject most generally held amongst Protestant divines.

Is there any necessary connexion between the doctrine of our Lord's reign upon earth and the opinion that the separate spirit is more or less in a state of unconsciousness? Or, is the view of the future glory permitted to become so absorbing as to throw too much into the shade the intervening bliss of the separate spirit? Or, does the differ-

ence of opinion arise from the different modes of interpreting Scripture, which are severally adopted by the spiritualists and literalists?

There is no conceivable connexion between the doctrines above-mentioned; but it is possible that the mind, when in a state of transition from the belief of a spiritual to that of a literal reign, may be susceptible of impressions, which lead to erroneous views.

It is not long after the belief in our Lord's personal reign upon earth is received, that the student discovers passages which have been incautiously applied to the separate spirit in heaven, but which do in truth refer to the state of glory upon earth; and as these are one after another pressed upon his mind, he finds that the popular view, in many instances, is not soundly maintained; and he begins to suspect that the doctrine has not any scriptural support, and is nothing more than a corollary from the current belief of the day with regard to our Lord's kingdom.

There is always danger, when giving up

error, that some truth, which has been held together with the error, may be resigned with it also : faith, when it has been abused and overburdened, becomes suspicious, and the reaction of extreme credulity is not unfrequently infidelity, either secret or avowed. In the present case, though the error is uncomfortable rather than perilous, the danger of falling into it is great, in consequence of so many texts having been wrongly applied in support of the orthodox faith, and there really being but few in the New Testament which do properly relate to it. But it will be perceived that there is no necessity for holding the one doctrine because of a belief in the other. The error has in fact been occasioned by the erroneous manner in which the truth has been maintained.

Nevertheless, his suspicions being aroused, the enquirer sets himself diligently to examine the question, and he is next influenced by perceiving that, in passages where he would have expected mention of the intermediate state, he finds no notice of it whatever, but, on the contrary, the kingdom of

glory is prominently held forth, as the object of the believer's expectancy. The intermediate state being thus passed over in silence, he now more than suspects that it is a condition of apathy, rather than of active bliss.

But this argument is without force, if the different standing-points of believers now, and believers to whom the Apostles wrote, are borne in mind. We look back over the long period which has elapsed since our Lord's ascension, and unwarily suppose, that the fact, which in its retrospection influences us, must have been prospectively contemplated by them; and that, if so, an intermediate state of bliss would have been a subject of much too deep an interest to be passed over in silence. But we ought rather to place ourselves in their position, and then consider, whether a dilation upon the bliss of the intermediate state would indeed have proved a theme of consolation.

Our Lord's own followers were called *upon to be* in constant watchfulness and

expectation of His re-appearing ; and in consequence of this, the Apostles spoke and wrote in the practical contemplation of His returning before the passing away of the generation which they were addressing. Then it evidently follows, that the great subject of hope which would be held before the believer, would not be the intermediate state, even though the intermediate state were exceedingly glorious : and this, not simply because the period before Christ's return is spoken of as comparatively "a very little time," but because, from the language of the Apostles, the great majority of those addressed by them must have concluded that they might be amongst those who would not pass through the intermediate state at all.

What other conclusion could have been drawn by the Thessalonians, when St. Paul comforted them with the thought of Jesus bringing back those that were asleep, and that "we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air"

(1 Thess. iv. 17)? It would have been almost irrelevant to expatiate upon the bliss of the intermediate state, for it would have disturbed the idea of speedy reunion in perfected bliss, which the Apostle wished to convey. All that we could expect would be some incidental mention of the place or condition of the spirits of the perfected just; and *that* we have in the assertion that God will bring them back with Jesus,—a necessary inference from their sleeping* in Jesus, who has died and risen again.

Hence it will be perceived, that the error does not consist in giving too much prominence to the hope of our Lord's reign upon earth, but rather in failing to seize the subject of condolence most proper for those addressed in the apostolic epistles.

Thus far, it will be perceived, the arguments derived from the New Testament in support of the sleep of the soul, are in

* They may be said to sleep in Jesus, not because of the dormancy of their spirits, but because they have not the use of their outward senses. The mind and fancy are often active, when the outward senses are *in repose*, and this is the state which we call sleep.

their nature merely negative. But one who has been brought to believe in our Lord's personal reign upon earth, has learned neither to neglect nor to spiritualize the language of the Old Testament, and there he finds that Sheol or Hades (Ps. xvi. 10, with Acts ii. 27; Hos. xiii. 14, with 1 Cor. xv. 55), is mentioned as the receptacle of separate spirits; that to Sheol the patriarchs descended (Gen. xxxvii. 35); that to Sheol the soul of Jesus descended (Ps. xvi. 10), and that Sheol is the place into which the wicked shall be turned (Ps. ix. 17); that Sheol has already, in one instance, been the receptacle of the body as well as of the soul (Num. xvi. 30, 33), and that ultimately, Sheol will be the place of punishment of both body and soul. (Prov. xv. 24; Matt. x. 28; Rev. xix.) If, then, the souls of the righteous and wicked are all in one common receptacle, he is apt to conclude that none are in glory; nay, he cannot conceive, that, if mingled together with the wicked, the souls of the righteous are *in a state of bliss or even of consciousness.*

Here the arguments, it will be admitted, are not negative, but positive; but then the subject is a little changed. Instead of the powers and condition of the separate spirit, these texts go to show the place of the separate state. From the comparative silence of the New Testament, the apathy of the soul is inferred; from the positive statements of the Old Testament as to the place of separate souls, it is next supposed, that the incidental mention once or twice of being with Christ cannot refer to any active bliss in the presence of the Lord, but at most to some state of negative consciousness of glory in anticipation.

In order to answer this part of the argument, only some discrimination is necessary. We must first distinguish between the different parts of Hades allocated to the souls of the righteous and of the wicked, *before* the ascension of our Lord; and we must next decide as to the place and state of blessed spirits *since* He has *been* "received up into glory."

We read of the "lowest hell," and of "the depths of hell" (Deut. xxxii. 22; Ps. lxxxvi. 13; Prov. ix. 18), expressions which, while they denote a part of the unseen world which is appointed for the wicked, do also imply that there are other regions in "the nether parts of the earth." There are similar expressions also in the New Testament, such as the bottomless pit (Rev. xx. 1), and Gehenna* (Matt. x. 28), and the lake of fire (Rev. xix. 20, and xx. 15), corresponding with that part of Hades in which Dives was, "being in torments." (Luke xvi. 23.)

But in Sheol, or Hades, there were also blissful regions, although the names of them are chiefly "brought to light" in the New Testament; for in this, as in other respects, the saints of former dispensations

* Gehenna is not mentioned before Joshua's time, the pollution of the valley at that time being the occasion. In the eighty-eighth Psalm, there are several names for the intermediate state, verse three, Sheol; verse four, Bor, the pit; verse six, the lowest pits and darkness; verse eleven, Abaddon, destruction; verse twelve, the land of forgetfulness, or of oblivion.

were much in the dark, and, therefore, all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Heb. ii. 15; Ps. lxxxviii.)

Abraham's bosom (Luke xvi. 22, 30) was the region of the dead, for Abraham was in Sheol. The parable also intimates that Dives and Lazarus were both in the same place, separated by a gulf.

It is generally supposed that "Paradise" occurs first in the New Testament, but the term appears to be derived from the Old Testament (Neh. ii. 8; Eccles. ii. 5); and in Cant. iv. 13, it seems to refer, though enigmatically, to the separate state of believers. The same figure, however, though under a different term, is applied more explicitly to the intermediate state by Ezekiel. (Ezek. xxxi. 16.) In the Song we have, "Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates," the plants are, "trees of righteousness," as pomegranates they are fruitful ones, in paradise, a fenced place, a state of security; Ezekiel speaks of these as "trees of Eden," the garden of the Lord, in "the nether parts of the earth."

These two passages, when taken into combination, may doubtless be considered as having originated this use of the term. So our Lord, when He descended into "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9), went "into Paradise,"—the Paradisè to which He promised the thief admission that very day. (Luke xxiii. 43.)

By discriminating between the different compartments in Hades, and, again, between the state of believers before and after the ascension of our Lord, I believe we are able successfully to meet all the passages which are, by some, considered positive in their testimony against the doctrine that "the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord do live with Almighty God."—*Church of England Burial Service.*

Under former dispensations, the souls of saints and sinners were alike in Hades, but they did not jostle with each other; there was a wide gulf between "the bosom of Abraham" and the "belly of hell." Again, though the souls of Old Testament believers did descend into Hades, what

hinders that the spirits of the perfected just should now ascend to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to God, the Judge of all ?

Towards the maintenance of this last opinion I will now advance some remarks, chiefly from 2 Cor. v. The reasons why I prefer this passage are, because some who do not look for our Lord's reign upon earth think that it supports their view of heaven being the place of the perfect consummation and bliss of the believer ; and because others, who do look for our Lord's reign, are divided as to whether this passage refer to the ultimate or the intermediate state ; * and, lastly, because I believe that, in this passage, the doctrine has its principal seat, the mention in other texts of Scripture, being more incidental, for the reason I have already assigned.

St. Paul, in the preceding context (2 Cor.

* I have also been able to take advantage of Dr. Goodwin's exposition of the passage. Manton has also written a course of sermons on the chapter, but *they are practical rather than argumentative.*

iv. 13) declares, notwithstanding the great persecutions he endured, that he continued to speak because he had the same spirit of faith as the Lord Jesus, who, in Ps. cxvi. 9, 10, says, "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living. I believed, therefore have I spoken." * He next (ver. 14) enlarges upon this hope concerning the resurrection glory, "knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus" (who is the speaker in Ps. cxvi.), "shall raise up us also through Jesus, and shall present us with you." "Us," if delivered to death, "together with you," if you live till the second Advent; for all the sufferings he underwent were in order to bring them to glory; and further, that their hallelujahs might amply redound to the glory of God. (Ver. 15.) "Therefore," the assurances of his own awaiting bliss, the desire of theirs, and the zeal which he had for God's glory, prevented him from fainting.

* Professor Scholefield observes, "The particle which is omitted in the common version forms an important connexion with the preceding verse."

“Therefore we faint not, but even though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward [man] is renewed day by day.” (Ver. 16.)

So completely the reverse from fainting, so independent is the inner man of the outer, that the constant renewal of the one is progressing as the decay of the other is advancing. It is this inner man which is “strengthened with might by God’s spirit,” (Eph. iii. 16), and its tastes are quite opposite to the desires of the outer man, for it “delights in the law of God.” (Rom. vii. 22.) How is it possible to suppose that this inner man,—growing up to maturity, independently of the body; the immediate susceptible of the Spirit’s influence and invigoration; which has tastes and delights in exact accordance with the holiness of God; which is, therefore, striving to be delivered from the body of sin and death;—how, I say, is it possible to suppose that, when absent from the body, its delight will terminate in oblivion; its susceptibility of *the Spirit’s influence* will change to apathy;

its vigour and activity will become listlessness and torpor?

The apostle says, "*Even though*," as taking the worst view of what can befall him; for he speaks afterwards of preferring translation to dissolution.

"For our light momentary affliction is working out for us an exceedingly excelling [and] eternal weight of glory." (Ver. 17.)

The "us," in ver. 17, is the "inner man" of the former verse, which, henceforth, through the discourse, bears the personality. We subsequently learn (2 Cor. v. 5), that the fitting of this inner man for glory, whilst the old is decaying, is the immediate work of God.

There is an antithesis between "a moment," and "eternity;" in the moment is misery, in eternity is glory; the unseen state comes under one or other, but certainly it is not a condition of misery to the believer. This is confirmed by the following verse; for there the division is between things seen and not seen, and things temporary and eternal; the things seen are

temporary, the unseen are eternal; the unseen state, therefore, is part of this eternity of glory.

“ While we look not [are not aiming] at the things seen, but at those not seen; for the things seen are temporary, but the things not seen are eternal.” (Ver. 18.)

This verse limits the *subject* and the *nature* of these afflictions which work out beneficially; it is the afflictions of those aiming at, and in consequence of their aiming at, unseen and eternal things.

Now the question is, when the outward man is entirely decayed, what becomes of that inner man, which has been strengthened with all might, which has been delighting in all holiness, and which has been fitting for an eternal weight of glory? This the Apostle proceeds to show in the following verses:—

“ For we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens.” (Chap. v. 1.)

Paul enforces what he says in chap. iv. 17,

by affirming his consciousness of the awaiting glory.

“The earthly house of our tabernacle,” appears to be the same as “the outward man.” (2 Cor. iv. 16.) The Apostle sets up a comparison of two houses, of the tabernacle with the temple (as he did before of two men), the inner man removing from one to the other. It is a house, with respect to the inhabitant, a soul in a body; it is a tabernacle, with regard to its frailty, easily taken down and removed.

In expressing the supposition of death, the Apostle keeps up the distinction between the mortal body, and the “we,” or the “inner man.” He does not say, “if we die,” which might involve the fate of both body and soul; the expression seems chosen with the intent to intimate such a separation as would mark the continued existence of the inner man which still bears the personality.*

* With Peter, in like manner, under the same figure, the inner man bears the personality. “Shortly I must put off [this] my tabernacle.” (2 Pet. i. 14.)

“Earthly house” is here in opposition to the other members of the sentence.

Earthly.—I. As to the place, in opposition to that “in the heavens.”

II. From earth, as to its substance, in opposition to the “building from God.”

1. Its composition (Gen. xviii. 27; Job iv. 19).

2. Sustentation (Ps. civ. 14).

3. Dissolution (Gen. iii. 19; Eccles. xii. 7; Ps. cxlvi. 4).

III. By intervention of earthly parents, in opposition to being “not made with hands.”

The “inner man” can say immediately upon dissolution “we have,” not, “we shall have;” St. Paul is speaking of the immediate issue,—it is a point of time, a state ensuing upon dissolution—it is the same as “when our earthly house is dissolved.” The Apostle is showing not what will be the state of the “inner man,” when it shall again be reunited to its body, but its condition during the interim when subsisting out of the body. The

glorified body will not come from heaven, but from the earth; the very body which is sown in corruption, will be raised in glory. The building here spoken of, is "in the heavens."

The Apostle says, "We know that we have a building from God;" not a bare conjecture of a general truth, but a confident assurance of a particular application; "we," not "I," not Paul alone, but all the saints have assurance of the object, and should have of the subject; there is the certainty of the thing, and should be the confidence of the person.

I do not know whether there is any force in what I am going to offer, but it has struck me that the mode of introducing this verse does not imply that St. Paul derived his knowledge of this truth, by being the first who was inspired to communicate it. He does not say, "I delivered unto you that which I also received," but "*we* know;"—it is a generally received truth. I will at any rate pause and consider whether he might not have derived his knowledge by other means.

viz., previous revelation, and ocular demonstration.

First, as to previous revelation. Our adorable Lord had promised that "the gates of Hades" should not prevail against His Church. (Matt. xvi. 18.) Now, though I know another interpretation is generally put upon this promise, the simple meaning seems to be, that henceforth the souls of believers should no more be detained in Hades than His was.

Our blessed Lord, moreover, prays that His people may behold His glory (John xvii. 24), not the glory which He would share with them (ver. 22), but the incommunicable glory which He had with the Father. Now, as the former promise was only with regard to Hades, and not the grave, so the being with Christ where He now is, is not extended to the body, but is the exalted place of the separate spirit; and this not only marks the place where the disembodied spirits are, but also their capability of apprehending the manifestations of *His glory*.

Christ also promises Peter (John xiii. 36)

that he shall follow Him, by laying down his life; but though Peter was to lay down his life, our Lord also declares that His people have eternal life, and shall never die. From all these passages it might undoubtedly be inferred, that the spirit, when absent from the body, would be present with the Lord, in a state of consciousness, with an unbounded possession of life. But it may be a question whether these promises were generally known by the disciples before John's Gospel was penned.

But may not St. Paul's own experience have been sufficient to enlighten him? He was caught up into the third heaven, and received wondrous revelations, some of which were unutterable; and he was not conscious whether he himself at the time of these manifestations was in the body or out of the body. Clearly, then, in his estimation, the intervention of the body was in no degree necessary for the spirit's reception of heavenly knowledge and glory; and may we not conclude that he actually saw the spirits of the perfected just.

before the throne, as well as the unutterable glory of the beatific vision?

The question as to how St. Paul derived his knowledge may, however, be rather curious than important; we will, therefore, pass on to consider the truth revealed. The soul or spirit, immediately upon dissolution, is to have a house, in place of the earthly tabernacle. What is that house? Not the glorified body, as I have already observed; for that comes not from the heavens. We may say that, according to original constitution, it was not good for the soul of man to dwell alone; as severed from the body, it is an imperfect being; may not the heavenly house supply the imperfection of the naked spirit, giving it a defined form * and whatever else is necessary for communion in the heavenly state?

“There seems,” says Dr. Engel, “no foundation whatever for supposing that our souls are destined to pass from an alliance

* What did the wondering, doubting disciples understand by Peter’s angel? (Acts xii. 15.) A *spiritual form, having the exact appearance of Peter.*

with bodily organs into a purely spiritual condition; some instrumentality for the purpose of receiving and communicating ideas appears, in fact, not only to be a requisite for the original development of the human mind, but an inseparable necessity of its peculiar nature." (Quoted by Muston on "Future Recognition.") Perhaps, one scarcely knows sufficiently what a purely spiritual condition is, so as to be able to pronounce positively upon it; but I think the spirit will have a defined form, as well as powers necessary for communicating and receiving spiritual impressions.

"Not being made with hands," implies that it is the immediate creation of God (see Heb. ix. 11), without the intervention of second causes. It is "eternal" because it is "life" (Rom. viii. 10), subject to no decay. And it is "in the heavens," for the spirits of the perfected just are with the angels and Jesus, &c. (Heb. xii. 23); and as the clouds dispelled give a clear sight of the sun, so the body being dissolved,

the soul is enabled to behold the unclouded glory of the Lord.

“For in this [respect] we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our house from heaven.”

The metaphor in this verse does not appear to me changed; the allusion in this and the preceding verse being to the curtains of the tabernacle.

The groans here mentioned refer rather to the vehement desires after the heavenly house, than to the burdens of the regenerate mentioned in verse 4. In verse 1, the Apostle declares the Christian's faith concerning the glory; in verse 2, he shows the effects, and the workings of the heart towards that glory, as flowing from this faith; for living faith works upon the affections suitably to the object known or believed, for affections follow persuasions; hence the glory proposed in the first verse as the object of our faith, is the object of our desires in the second and fourth verses.

The vehement desires implanted in the

saints for this glory, demonstrate that it is prepared for them ; for God's Spirit works not desires after a glory which there is not, —“Blessed are they that hunger for they shall be filled.” (Matt. v. 6.) “The Lord will fulfil the desires of them that fear Him,” (Ps. cxlv. 19,) whether righteousness here, or glory hereafter. Now, the more holy men are, the stronger are these desires, which shows that they are the implanting of the Holy Spirit. The nearer that Christian men approach their change, the more vividly, generally speaking, do they realize the unseen world. What a wound do we give to all experimental religion, if we say that so many preeminently holy ones leave this world under a delusion !

The object desired is the “house from heaven,” not the glorified body, that is from earth.

The right grounds of this groaning are :—

1. A complete assurance of our state being “far better.” (Phil. i. 23.)

2. A desire of nearest conjunction, fullest fruition, and closest communion with the Lord, "To depart and be with Christ."

If our version of verse 3 is correct, I conceive the meaning to be "We earnestly desire to be clothed with our house from heaven, since being clothed we shall not be found naked before the tribunal of Christ." The expression "found," refers to the day of judgment in 2 Peter iii. 14; Phil. iii. 9; Matt. xxiv. 46; and for being "naked," or "ashamed" in the same connexion, see 1 John ii. 28; Rev. iii. 18, and Rev. xiv. 15. But the late John Walker, whose critical acumen was a handmaid to great spiritual discernment, says, "I am quite satisfied that we ought to read—*inasmuch as*, EVEN *when unclothed*, we shall not be found naked:" that is, when divested of the earthly tabernacle, we shall be invested with an heavenly.

"This reading," he adds, "is marked by Griesbach, as worthy of attention; but appears to me decisively recommended to *our adoption*, as well by the plain and con-

sistent sense which it affords, as by allowing its proper sense of **EVEN** to the conjunction” * (*Walker’s Remarks corrective, &c.*, Vol. II., p. 70). I would add that there is an air of paradox, which, though by no means foreign to St. Paul’s style, might account for some transcriber changing a letter, in order to remove what he might think a difficulty. I still, however, think that the saying, “we shall not be found naked,” is suggestive of the day of judgment, which the Apostle expressly mentions in the 10th verse, and to which, indeed, the verse immediately looks forward.

“For we that are in the tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not because we wish to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that the mortal may be swallowed up of life.” (2 Cor. v. 4.)

St. Paul appears to me to allude to what

* Professor Scholefield, following the authorised version, says, “*Literally*, having put [it] on.” The one reading refers to putting on the heavenly house, the other, to putting off the earthly tabernacle.

he had told the Corinthians, in his former epistle (1 Cor. xv. 45—53), and he here shows that the earnest desire for the house from heaven is not incompatible with the desire for the mortal to put on immortality, without the separation of soul and body. It seems to correspond with the alternative proposed in chap. iv. 16, where he shows, that though of the two dissolution is less to be desired than translation, yet that even upon dissolution there is a weight of glory for the separate spirit, and thus the consideration of the intermediate state was introduced; but, in this verse the Apostle looks forward to the more preferable state of resurrection glory, the groaning being not a longing to get rid of the body, even though the body be a burden,—but on the contrary a panting for complete glorification. For if now, upon dissolution, we are clothed upon with our house from heaven, we shall not be found naked, before the tribunal of Christ, at the day of judgment, but shall then receive the fruition of bliss, both in

body and soul; and it is this hope which makes us confident in death without our preferring death.

“We in the tabernacle do groan,” still marking that the inner man bears the personality, also intimating another existence of the saints, viz., “out of the tabernacle;” not “in *this* tabernacle,” in opposition to another tabernacle, but “in *the* tabernacle,” in contradistinction to those out of the tabernacle (ver. 9).

It is “we” only “in the tabernacle,” who groan; this is different from the desire of the separate spirit for full fruition.

“Groan, being burdened.” It is true that we are burdened, having a body of humiliation; nevertheless ours is not the unnatural desire of death, as such—death which was introduced by sin; a creature does not desire its own deprivation, nature abhors death, but grace desires glory.

We desire “not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that the mortal may be swallowed up of life.” This explains, without a figure, the desire of a devout soul.

But it refers, I apprehend, exclusively to the "mortal body," not to "the spirit which is life," not to "the inner man," which has already "passed from death unto life." I have mentioned that St. Paul probably refers to what he had already told the Corinthians, that "this mortal shall put on immortality." It will, therefore, be advisable to glance for a moment at that passage.

"There is," says he, "a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Cor. xv. 44); the natural body is that which we derive from our first parents, informed and actuated by the soul; "and so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul" (ver. 45), and all his descendants bear his image. "As [was] the earthy (that is, Adam), such [are] they also that are earthy" (ver. 48); as was Adam, such are all the descendants of Adam.

Now, as a natural or *soulish* body is a body formed from the earth for, and actuated by, a soul, so a spiritual body is, by *parity* of reasoning, a body formed suitably

for, and to be actuated by, a quickening spirit. This is what I understand the apostle to affirm.

The spiritual body has a relation to "the last Adam," similar to the relation which the natural or soulish body has to the first Adam. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." And so it is written, "The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam [was made] a quickening spirit." (Verses 44 and 45.) The forty-sixth verse then shows the order, first the natural, then the spiritual; the forty-seventh verse shows the nature of the federal head in each case, "the first man [was] of the earth, earthy, &c.;" then, as I apprehend, the forty-eighth verse marks that the change shall be in conformity with the order mentioned in verse 46, and should run thus:—"As [was] the earthy, such they also [are] that are earthy: and as [is] the heavenly, such they also [shall be] that are heavenly"—"and (therefore), as we have borne the

image of the earthy (that is the first Adam), we shall also bear the image of the heavenly," that is the second Adam. Now, as the Apostle is speaking of the image of the first Adam borne by his descendants, in that they are living souls actuating earthy bodies, so the image of the second Adam to be borne by heavenly ones in the resurrection, must be their constitution as quickening spirits actuating and vivifying bodies suitable for such influence.

Three particulars are predicated with regard to the suitability of the spiritual body for actuation by a life-giving spirit. It will be incorruptible (ver. 42) or immortal (ver. 53), glorious (ver. 43), like Christ's glorious body (Phil. iii. 21), and potent (ver. 43). Sometimes in Scripture, spirit and power are opposed to flesh and weakness. In writing to the Corinthians, St. Paul says, "The weapons of our warfare are not *carnal* but *mighty*" (2 Cor. x. 4); and Dr. Goodwin gives a very pertinent illustration from Isa. xxxi. 3: "The

Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses *flesh*, and not *spirit*." Flesh, we see, is used to denote weakness, and spirit power. The powers, therefore, of a body to be actuated by a life-giving spirit, must be very great.

"Incorruptible," and "immortal," I conceive to be used in this passage as synonymous; the difference consists rather in the process of attainment than in the condition attained, the one referring to *resurrection*, the other to *translation*,—"the dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, and we (who may be alive), shall be changed" (ver. 52), and this change shall be wrought by this mortal putting on "*immortality*." (Ver. 54.) It is this which the Apostle pre-eminently desires in 2 Cor. v. 4,—“that the mortal might be swallowed up of life.”

Now it appears to me not improbable, that the change wrought upon the separate spirit when it puts off the tabernacle, and which gives it a kind of completeness and independent existence, is that which will

make it a quickening spirit to the glorified body, when reunited.*

“ Now he that hath wrought us for this very [thing is] God, who also hath given to us the earnest of the Spirit. Being, therefore, always confident, &c.”

Here there are two additional arguments for confidence: God Himself has wrought us for this end, “ we are His workmanship.” (Eph. ii. 10.) He has also given the Spirit as a pledge and foretaste.

“ He who hath *wrought us*.” I apprehend the apostle refers back to chap. iv. 16. God is the agent, afflictions the instrument, renewing the inner man, whilst the outer man is decaying. There is probably an allusion to the fitting of the materials for the temple.† (1 Kings vi. 36.)

“ He who hath wrought us is God.” We are thus called upon to consider how great is the Efficient. It is the work of Deity.

* As our blessed Lord, when put to death in the flesh was quickened in the spirit. (1 Pet. iii. 18.)

† In the Sept. of 1 Kings vi. 36, the word is the *same as here used*. See also Sept. Exod. xxxv. 33.

Sweet thought ! If the architect and builder is God, there will not be one blow too many, or one more heavy than necessary, in shaping and fitting the spiritual stones for the temple.

Again, if the only wise, all-powerful Efficient be “working” a soul to an end, what is to hinder the accomplishment at dissolution, when all the grace in preparation for glory is completed ? The “us” thus wrought upon is “the inner man,” which is fitted to love and worship God. But the worship which He requires is in accordance with His own nature. (John iv. 23.) Will the inner man be less fitted to perform spiritual worship, when more assimilated to the nature of God ?

The apostle speaks of the work as already in part accomplished. “He who *hath* wrought us,”—not who will fit us ; this cannot be predicated of the body, which is not wrought upon in a way of glorifying in this life ; he speaks of the body as decaying, it is the soul which is now made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. (Col. i. 12.)

The inner man is the immediate object of God's operations ; but if so, its fitness for glory does not depend upon its conjunction with the body. Nor must we suppose that it is the desire of glory wrought in us of which this clause of the verse speaks, but it is "us," as wrought and fitted for glory.

St. Paul, in another epistle (Rom. viii. 35), challenges,—Can the sword, *i.e.*, violent death, separate us from the love of Christ, that is, from our love to Him ; for our being martyrs in His cause could not be a ground of separation from His love to us. Well, but if love cease not to act at death, consciousness and knowledge do not, nor the bliss that attends the exercise of the affections rightly directed. "In death we do more than conquer through Him that loved us." (Ver. 37.)

The earnest of the Spirit is another argument for confidence ; an earnest is a part of the whole ; in this it differs from a pledge, which may be of a different nature. Then, as is the earnest, such is the fuller possession. *But the Spirit's witnessings are not*

through the body ; we see Him not, we hear no audible voice, our bodily organs are not necessary for the reception of His sweet influences ; He witnesseth directly to “our spirits.” (Rom. viii. 16.) Why, then, should our spirits cease to receive the witness of the Spirit, when “absent from the body ?” I rather believe that the “inexpressible joy” (1 Pet. i. 8) to which a believer may now attain is but an earnest, a taste of the graciousness of the Lord, which the separate spirit will enjoy.

“ Being, therefore, always confident, and knowing that whilst we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” (2 Cor. v. 6.)

There is, in this verse :—

1. The connecting particle, “therefore.”
Because God has wrought in us, and because God has given us the earnest of the Spirit.

2. The confidence felt.

3. The constancy, “always.”

4. The consciousness, “knowing.”

5. The present condition, “present in the body.”

6. The consequent loss, "absent from the Lord."

Boyse says, that verses 6 and 8 do not, in our version, give the force of the original :—"We, indwelling in the body, dwell forth from the Lord." Professor Scholefield, for the sake of uniformity, renders it, "whilst we are present." But either rendering amounts to this,—as "absent" denotes local separation, so "present" must indicate local contiguity. Some would maintain, that "present with the Lord," means the Lord's presence with us, thus making one member of the sentence to imply change of *place* and the other change of *condition*, which appears quite contrary to sound principles of interpretation. I have already remarked, that, in the preceding verse, St. Paul refers back to chap. iv. 16 ; so I apprehend in this verse he alludes to the dwelling of the inner man, mentioned in the subsequent context. Whilst in the tabernacle of the body, the earthly house, we are absent from our tabernacle with the Lord, the house not made *with hands*.

“For we walk by faith, not by sight, but we are confident.” (Verse 7.)

Our version of verse 7 seems rather to imply that our not having vision is the reason why we desire to be absent from the body. I rather suppose the apostle points out whence the confidence of which he speaks proceeds, reverting back to the commencement of this episode, where he had laid down what was the principle which so strongly actuated him. We have the same spirit of faith which the Lord Jesus had (iv. 13), who died for us (v. 14, 15), and we have confidence for the two reasons mentioned (ch. v. 5), because, God has wrought us, and because God has given us the Spirit as an earnest. This confidence is the confidence of faith, and it is this confidence of faith, which influences the Apostle in his decision mentioned in the following verse, “But we are confident, and prefer rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. v. 8.)

So far from fainting at the thought of

the outward man perishing, the Apostle preferred it :—

“ Wherefore we strive, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.” (2 Cor. v. 9.)

Because we are confident, and because we desire God’s presence, we strive to be well-pleasing unto Him ; for such “ where-fores,” see 1 Cor. xv. 58 ; Heb. xii. 28 ; Col. i. 10. Perhaps, the Apostle had the case of Enoch in his mind ; Enoch pleased God, and God translated him. (Heb. xi. 5.) We strive to please God, whether translation or dissolution be our portion, being confident the Lord will reward us. The being “ present,” I understand to be the same as (verse 6) “ indwelling in the body ;” and “ absent ” I suppose is the same as the earthly house of this tabernacle being dissolved. (Ver. 1.)

“ For we must all be manifested before the tribunal of Christ, that each may receive the things through the body according to those he has practised, whether good or evil.” (2 Cor. v. 10). Here, I take rather

a different view from what is generally held. The Apostle had stated that what he most desired was, that the mortal should be swallowed up of life,—that his vile body should be changed into a glorious body; but that even dissolution was a state to be preferred greatly beyond the present mortal life. He, however, strove to be well-pleasing to God, because whether in the flesh until, or translated before, the Second Advent, we shall all be *manifested* before the tribunal of Christ. And this I do not understand to refer exclusively to the secrets of all hearts being laid open, but also to the manifested bodily condition of the righteous and the wicked. With regard to the righteous, the mortal will be swallowed up of life,—whereas, with regard to the wicked, we know, from other passages, that their bodies will not be bodies of glory, but of shame and abhorrence. (Dan. xii. 2; Isa. lxvi. 24). Hence I understand the meaning to be, that, as the deeds have been done by the body, as an instrument either of *righteousness* or *unholiness*, so shall the

recompence be through the body, either of corruption or of glory.

This interpretation seems to me consistent with the following verse. We must not lose the relation between the manifestation mentioned in verse 10, and those of verse 11. We shall be *made manifest* before the tribunal of Christ; we *are made manifest* unto God, and I trust also, *are made manifest* unto your consciences. Now, though the sense would be very good, if we confined the meaning simply to sincerity, for the manifestation in each case would be similar,—the Apostle could appeal to the heart-searching God, as well as to the consciences of those he addressed, as to his sincerity, which would also hereafter be manifested before the tribunal of Christ;—yet in this clause, the manifestation of which he speaks includes *all*, “We must *all* be manifested before the tribunal of Christ.” And I do not see why the open, glorious manifestation of the righteous may not also be included, as well as *the fearful* manifestation of the wicked,

which is implied in—"knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." And with this solemn thought I will conclude, in the language of the last of the prophets, "Then shall ye discern between the righteous and the wicked." (Mal. iii. 18.)

